

Chapter 5

Comments and Coordination



Environmental Assessment
LPGA BLVD EXTENSION PD&E STUDY

5. Comments and Coordination

Proactive community involvement is an integral part of any successful community project. The PIP process is developed to ensure that important community concerns and technical issues are identified early in the project. The purpose of this program is to establish and maintain communication with the public at-large and individuals and agencies concerned with the project and its potential impacts. In an effort to resolve all issues identified, FDOT has conducted an extensive interagency coordination and consultation effort, and public participation process. This section of the document details FDOT's program to fully identify, address, and resolve all project-related issues identified through the PIP process.

5.1 Public Involvement Program

A PIP was originally developed and carried out as an integral part of the LPGA Boulevard Extension PD&E Study. Details of the entire public involvement program are documented in the *LPGA Boulevard Extension PD&E Study: Public Involvement Program*.

As stated in Chapter 1 of this document, A Phase I – Feasibility Study was performed on this project prior to proceeding with the current PD&E Study. As a result, the PIP for the PD&E Study includes public involvement activities performed as part of the LPGA Boulevard Extension project during Phase I – Feasibility Study.

The PIP for the project consisted of four elements, including:

- Environmental Advisory Group
- Community Participation
- Information Elements
- Public Hearing

Descriptions of the four information elements are summarized herein.

5.1.1 Environmental Advisory Group

As part of the PIP for the LPGA Boulevard Extension, an Environmental Advisory Group (EAG) was formed in an effort to provide technical input to the study team. The goal of the EAG was to provide input, review concepts and associated potential impacts, and offer guidance during the PD&E study process, but with emphasis on the environmental aspects of the project. The EAG consisted of representatives from local, state, and federal permitting agencies as well as environmental interest groups such as 1000 Friends of Florida, the Florida Audubon Society, and the Sierra Club.

Three meetings (December 2, 2004, February 16, 2005, and August 2, 2005) have been conducted with the EAG throughout the study to discuss impacts and solicit input regarding environmental concerns of the group.

5.1.2 Community Participation

The success of the LPGA Boulevard Extension PD&E Study PIP hinged on the continual exchange of information between the project team and the public. The public is comprised of several groups including citizens who live and work within the study area, civic groups, neighborhoods and homeowner associations, environmental groups, business interests, government agencies, and elected and appointed officials. The community participation effort included public information workshops, focused meetings with local groups, and local government briefings, as well as meetings with the property owners, special interest groups, and businesses within the project study area.

5.1.2.1 Public Information Workshop

Two public workshops were held in conjunction with the LPGA Boulevard Extension project. One workshop was held during the Phase I – Feasibility Study and the other was held during the Phase II – PD&E Study. The workshops were conducted to afford citizens the opportunity of expressing their views concerning the proposed improvements. Both workshops were held at the Port Orange Regional Library located at 1005 City Center Circle, Port Orange, Florida, 32129.

In preparation for the workshops, notification mailings were sent to property owners, local elected officials, and other interested parties. Newspaper advertisements were placed in the *Orlando Sentinel* (Volusia County edition) and the *Daytona Beach News Journal*. In addition, press releases were faxed to radio and television stations. The press releases included a project location map and instructions for submitting comments for those unable to attend the meeting.

Both workshops were held in an informal, open house setting to encourage the exchange of information between the public and the study team. Project information and study alternatives were displayed on boards and provided in handouts for public review. In addition, representatives from FDOT, Volusia County, City of Daytona Beach, and City of Port Orange were available to talk with the public and answer questions.

Feasibility Public Workshop

The first workshop presented as part of the Phase I – Feasibility Study for this project was held on January 24, 2004 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose of the workshop was to explain the need for the study and proposed improvements, present the roadway typical sections being evaluated, and to provide an overview of the potential impacts and its associated costs. Fifteen citizens attended the workshop with 10 written comments received. Copies of the comment forms and response letters are provided in the project file. In general, the comments received focused on the following:

- Support the No Build option
- Representatives of the First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach expressed their support for the project regardless of the alternatives selected
- This project will bring unwanted development and urban sprawl
- Prefer alignment that connects LPGA Boulevard with Madeline Avenue over the connection to CR 415 (Tomoka Farms Road)

- Planned extension of LPGA Boulevard is being done to facilitate development of lands owned by Consolidated Tomoka Land Company; urban sprawl will degrade quality of life
- Opposed to development that occurs west of I-95 and would prefer to see mass transit instead
- Opposed to having the roadway be constructed adjacent to conservation lands and other valuable ecosystems
- Opposed to the extension because it will cut through environmentally sensitive lands and promote more traffic onto CR 415 and ultimately destroy the Volusia Conservation Corridor
- Proposed roadway will destroy wetlands, wildlife habitat, and water recharge areas

Alternatives Public Workshop

The second workshop presented as part of the Phase II – PD&E Study for this project, was held on December 16, 2004 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The purpose of the workshop was to provide background on the Phase I – Feasibility Study, present the viable alternatives, provide an overview of potential impacts and costs, explain the public involvement process, and provide a project schedule. Nine citizens attended the workshop and one written comment form in addition to two emails were received. Responses to the comments were prepared and mailed to each inquiry. Copies of these comment forms and responses are provided in the project file. In general, the comments received focused on the following:

- Support for the proposed roadway improvement project
- Regardless of the alternative selected, support the need for inclusion of a multi-use trail
- Support Alternative B-1 due to the additional access that would be provided to areas north of this project

A detailed summary of the workshops is included in the project file.

5.1.2.2 Local Government/Elected Officials Briefings

Members of the project team have attended several meetings with the Volusia County MPO, local and elected officials, appointed boards, and the staff of the city and county governments. These meetings were conducted in addition to the EAG meetings. These meetings allowed for a focused discussion of issues and concerns related to the specific jurisdictions. In each case, a presentation of the current project status and issues was given, followed by a question and answer period.

MPO Meetings

The project has been coordinated with the Volusia County MPO. The project was also coordinated with two separate advisory groups to the MPO. The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) reviewed the technical issues of the study, land use designations, and community input. The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) reviewed data analysis and recommendations prepared by the study team and provided objective feedback on the project.

Table 5-1 summarizes the meetings held with the Volusia County MPO for the project. Meetings specifically held to discuss this project during the Phase I - Feasibility Study are noted below.

TABLE 5-1
List of Volusia County MPO Meetings

Date of Meeting	Agency
November 11, 2003	Volusia County MPO Staff*
January 15, 2004	Volusia County MPO Staff*
February 17, 2004	Volusia County MPO TTC/CAC*
March 23, 2004	Volusia County MPO Board*
February 15, 2005	Volusia County MPO TTC/CAC
February 22, 2005	Volusia County MPO Board
August 24, 2005	Volusia County MPO Staff
May 16, 2006	Volusia County TTC/CAC
May 23, 2006	Volusia County MPO Board

* Meetings held specifically to discuss this project during the Phase I – Feasibility Study.

5.1.2.3 Local Agency Briefings

Numerous briefings have been held with the surrounding jurisdictions of the project study limits. The purpose of these briefings was to review major engineering and environmental elements, discuss alignment alternatives, and to determine general community concerns. These briefings have been held prior to the Public Hearing to provide local agency staff an initial opportunity to review improvement concepts and become familiar with potential impacts. A summarized list of the meetings held to date is presented in Table 5-2. Meetings held specifically to discuss this project during the Phase I – Feasibility Study are noted below.

TABLE 5-2
List of Local Agency Briefings

Date of Meeting	Local Agency
November 5, 2003	City of Port Orange*
November 10, 2003	Volusia County*
November 11, 2003	City of Daytona Beach*
November 20, 2003	Volusia County*
November 20, 2003	City of Daytona Beach*
November 20, 2003	City of Port Orange*
December 18, 2003	Volusia County*
December 18, 2003	City of Daytona Beach*
December 18, 2003	City of Port Orange*
October 14, 2004	City of Port Orange
October 14, 2004	City of Daytona Beach
October 14, 2004	Volusia County
January 5, 2005	Volusia County Solid Waste

TABLE 5-2 (CONTINUED)
List of Local Agency Briefings

Date of Meeting	Local Agency
January 24, 2005	Volusia County
January 27, 2005	City of Port Orange
January 27, 2005	City of Daytona Beach
January 27, 2005	Volusia County
March 10, 2005	Volusia County Council
April 7, 2005	City of Daytona Beach
May 3, 2005	City of Port Orange City Council
August 24, 2005	City of Port Orange
August 24, 2005	City of Daytona Beach
August 24, 2005	Volusia County Public Works/Solid Waste

* Meetings held specifically to discuss this project during the Phase I – Feasibility Study.

5.1.2.4 Coordination Meetings

Meetings were held with various agencies, large property owners, and special interest groups to review the project and to allow a more focused discussion of issues of special concern. Such issues include wetlands, threatened and endangered species, drainage, and potential floodplain impacts. A summarized list of the meetings held to date is presented in Table 5-3. In addition to the project meetings, correspondence with various local, state, and federal agencies was initiated. Copies of agency correspondence are provided in the project file and in Appendix A. Meetings held specifically to discuss this project during the Phase I – Feasibility Study are noted below.

TABLE 5-3
List of Coordination Meetings

Date of Meeting	Agency
November 11, 2003	Consolidated Tomoka, Indigo Development*
November 13, 2003	First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach*
March 8, 2004	St. Johns River Water Management District*
December 9, 2004	Defenders of Wildlife
January 24, 2005	First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach
March 31, 2005	First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach
July 6, 2005	St. Johns River Water Management District
July 7, 2005	U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

* Meetings held specifically to discuss this project during the Phase I – Feasibility Study.

5.1.3 Information Elements

The PIP was designed to inform the public and provide an opportunity for the public to express their ideas and concerns about the scope and impact of the study. Activities included newsletters, working with the media, and a project web site.

5.1.3.1 Newsletters

A project newsletter was published throughout the study effort, providing opportunities for the public to learn about project progress and about upcoming meetings. Three issues (April 2004, December 2004, and April 2006) have been published and copies of the newsletter were distributed to the project mailing list. Distribution of the newsletter was handled through direct mail, as handouts at meetings, and the project office. There was a final public hearing newsletter distributed to the public through the project mailing list, and handed out during the public hearing that was held on May 11, 2006.

5.1.3.2 Media

Project information was disseminated through the local print and broadcast media. Information was provided in the form of news releases and news stories generated either through the project office or unilaterally by individual media outlets. Media contacts were made prior to important public meetings and at key milestones, as well as when requested by the media or FDOT.

Materials were also provided to local government, civic, professional, and property owners for publication in their newsletters. Updated media kits were provided to a comprehensive media mailing list at project milestones. The media also were provided copies of salient information as deemed appropriate by the project media liaison.

5.1.3.3 Web Site

A web site also was created (www.lpgapde.com) and has been available since summer 2004. It provides general project information, including project schedule, process explanation, contacts, and other pertinent information.

5.1.4 Public Hearing

A public hearing was held for the LPGA Boulevard Extension project on Thursday, May 11, 2006 at the Port Orange Regional Library located at 1005 City Center Circle, Port Orange, Florida. The purpose of the hearing was to provide an official public forum through which citizens and government officials express their concerns, opinions, and comments with regard to the preferred improvement concept.

The public hearing was advertised consistent with federal and state requirements and was conducted consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Notification of the hearing was conducted under the following means:

- Letters of notice to property owners within 300 feet of the preferred improvement centerline
- Letters of notice to elected and appointed officials

- Letters to interested parties or those individuals and groups who asked to be placed on the project mailing list
- Legal advertisements in the *Orlando Sentinel* (Volusia County edition) and the *Daytona Beach News Journal*

Copies of the notification items are included in the *Comments and Coordination Report* (Inwood, 2006) prepared for this study.

The public hearing for the project began at 6:00 PM and adjourned at approximately 7:55 PM. During this time, project information was on display for viewing. In addition, the project team was available to respond to questions.

The formal presentation began at approximately 7:00 PM. At this time, project team participants were introduced and elected and appointed officials were asked to identify themselves. After the introductions, a presentation of the project and potential impacts to the environment were discussed. The formal portion of the hearing ended with a public testimony period. No oral statements were submitted to the court reporter.

A total of ten citizens attended the public hearing and three written comment forms were received. A summary of the comments made are as follows:

- Request for (2) copies of the proposed alignment adjacent to the Kirton property.
- Where is the funding for the project coming from? The environmental impact on air quality and potential contamination always a concern in view of the active hurricane seasons these past two years. How can that be described in advance as negligible?
- There is a great need in our community for this extension and also more alternative routes. These routes will be needed to relieve congestion during special events and also for evacuation routes for hurricanes. Our communities are growing by leaps and bounds going west of the coastline.

Although a ten-day comment period was given following the Public Hearing, no additional comments were received. A copy of the official public hearing transcript is provided in the *Comments and Coordination Report* (Inwood, 2006) prepared for this study.

5.2 Agency Coordination

This section provides a summary of the coordination with local, state, and federal agencies during the course of the project study. These coordination activities focused on the Advance Notification process and the coordination during the study process.

5.2.1 Advance Notification

Advance Notification (AN) is the means through which federal, state, and local agencies are informed of proposed actions by the FDOT. It also gives notice of FDOT's intent to apply for federal aid on a project. The AN process provides for early involvement of federal, state, and local agencies in the project development phase and allows them to share information and/or concerns for a proposed action. This process is required by the President's Executive Order 12372 and the Governor's Executive Order 93-194.

On August 10, 2004 a notification package, in accordance with FHWA requirements, was sent to initiate early coordination with government agencies and the general public to advise them that an EA would be prepared for the proposed LPGA Boulevard Extension project through Volusia County.

The AN was distributed to over 90 federal and state agencies and included a description of the project, explanation of the need for the project, potential alternatives, and potential effects of the project. A mailing list was included of the agencies to which the notification packages were sent, including federal, state, and local agencies with a stake or interest in the project. A copy of the AN package including a list of agencies that received the AN package, is provided in Appendix C.

Responses to comments received from agencies were prepared and distributed. The responses address various issues regarding the project and potential impacts. Copies of the comments received are included in Appendix A and a summary of the comments and responses are included in Appendix D.

Chapter 6

Commitments and Recommendations



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6. Commitments and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes FDOT's commitments to minimize impacts on the human environment as a result of the proposed action and describes the Preferred Alternative, which is being recommended for Location and Design Concept Acceptance.

6.1 Commitments

In order to minimize the impacts of this project on the human environment, the Department is committed to the following measures for the LPGA Boulevard Extension project.

Drainage Structures and Wildlife Crossings

The proposed preliminary design provides additional 36" pipes in upland locations for wildlife crossing; however, during final design the cost and feasibility of installing structures with larger cross sections, such as box culverts or 38" x 60" elliptical pipes in lieu of the proposed standard 36" concrete pipes will be investigated. Structures will not be considered that would substantially raise the profile grade and therefore increase wetland and floodplain impacts. Discussions with the state and federal resource agencies has begun and will continue during the design and permitting phases concerning appropriate wildlife mitigation measures, including wildlife crossings.

Conservation Lands

The Department recognizes that a new roadway will result in loss of wildlife habitat, and is committed to continuing its coordination with FFWCC to determine the maximum feasible size of additional wildlife openings and to determine if mitigation in excess of that provided for wetland impacts under F.S. 373.4137 is required for the loss of black bear habitat and for the fragmentation of the remaining wildlife habitat to the east of the LPGA Boulevard Extension. Additional mitigation may include coordination with the Volusia Forever Advisory Committee to identify and purchase strategically valuable lands needed to conserve biodiversity in the region, such as parcels within the Volusia Conservation Corridor that have already been identified through the Volusia Forever Program, but not yet funded for purchase and conservation.

Stormwater Management Systems

As part of the final design phase, opportunities that should be investigated further include evaluating potential joint-use ponds with adjacent projects such as the alignment study for CR 415 (Tomoka Farms Road) being performed by Volusia County.

Wetlands

Unavoidable wetland impacts which will result from the construction of this project will be mitigated as described in Section 4.3.4

During final design when specific topography surveys are available, reducing wetland impacts by reducing standard slopes will be evaluated. A design variance will be pursued if feasible.

Wildlife and Habitat

A fly-over will be required to confirm any eagle activity during final design and prior to issuance of any permits. In the event that a Bald Eagle's nest is found within 1500 feet of the project corridor, coordination will be initiated with USFWS and FFWCC.

The Department is also committed to implementing the USFWS-approved *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* (refer to Appendix H) during design and construction.

6.2 Recommendations

As a result of the public hearing, environmental studies, and interagency coordination, the alternative recommended for location and design concept acceptance is Alignment B-3. The recommended Alternative B-3 involves the proposed construction of a new two-lane facility. The limits of the project extend from CR 415 (Tomoka Farms Road) near the entrance to the Tomoka Farms Landfill to the current southern terminus of LPGA Boulevard at SR 600 (US 92) in Volusia County. The total project length is approximately 3.2 miles. The proposed improvements also include the construction of a new bridge structure (crossing over I-4), access management, and drainage and stormwater management facility improvements.

The proposed typical section, one lane in each travel direction, is consistent with the forecast daily traffic volume ranging between 12,300 and 14,400 vehicles during the design year 2030. The Preferred Alternative includes a multi-use trail which is supported by the Volusia County MPO and runs parallel on the east side of the roadway. The stormwater runoff from the new pavement will be conveyed by open swales to wet detention ponds along the alignment. Since the project is located in the 100-year floodplain, two floodplain compensation ponds are proposed to meet SJRWMD no rise criteria for the Tomoka River Basin. These compensation ponds are located east of the proposed alignment and outside of the 100-year floodplain. Refer to Section 3.4 for further details on the roadway and bridge typical sections selected for the Preferred Alternative.

The recommended alignment emerged as the Preferred Alternative from an extensive number of alternative configurations developed over the course of this PD&E Study (June 2004-June 2006) and a prior Feasibility Study (September 2003-April 2004). This Preferred Alternative was selected for its ability to effectively address the needs of the corridor by creating system continuity and an effective by-pass; reducing traffic volumes through the CR 415/US 92 intersection and providing relief; and directly connecting to the proposed Madeline Avenue extension.